



State of Illinois  
Illinois Deaf and Hard of  
Hearing Commission



# Annual Report 2022

Fiscal Year July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2022



## Illinois Deaf and Hard of Hearing Commission

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## **In Memory of Janet S. Lambert**

To Governor Pritzker and the People of Illinois:

On behalf of the Illinois Deaf and Hard of Hearing Commission (IDHHC), I am pleased to submit the 2022 Annual Report reflecting the fiscal year from July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022.

Governed by eleven (11) Commissioners who are appointed by the Governor's Office, the Commission promotes education and awareness of the legal requirements for effective communication, and advocates to improve communication access to all state program and services of Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and DeafBlind persons. The Commission also serves as the regulatory and licensing body responsible for licensing sign language interpreters in the State in accordance to the Interpreter for the Deaf Licensure Act of 2007.

The Commission continued to face the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic as we worked different ways to maximize our effort to operate the statutorily mandated programs and services for the Deaf, Hard of Hearing and DeafBlind population. Throughout the course of the fiscal year and in adherence to the health and safety protocols, the Commission continued to practice to safely work in the office in addition to partial remote working environments, conducted meetings remotely using the video technology platform for Commissioners and Illinois Board of Interpreters with livestream broadcast to the public in accordance with the Open Meetings Act.

This annual report highlights important information, notable accomplishments, and statistics. As always, the Commission looks forward to continuing its collaboration with the state agencies as well as partnerships with the stakeholders to identify, address and remove systemic and isolated barriers for Deaf, Hard of Hearing and DeafBlind people in the state of Illinois.

Respectfully submitted,

Benro Ogunyipe, Director

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# THE COMMISSION

The Illinois Deaf and Hard of Hearing Commission (IDHHC) is an executive state agency that advocates on behalf of the interests of persons in Illinois who are deaf or hard of hearing.

## COMMISSIONERS

The Commission is governed by eleven (11) Commissioners. The Commissioners are appointed by the Governor's Office and represent different geographical areas of Illinois.

<b>Dennis O'Brien</b>	–	Wheaton (Chairperson)
<b>Tyrone Barnes</b>	–	Grayslake
<b>Joseph Culpepper</b>	–	Bloomington
<b>Susan Dramin-Weiss</b>	–	Champaign
<b>Jean Draths</b>	–	Glenview
<b>Michael Dubowe</b>	–	Normal
<b>David Frazier</b>	–	University Park
<b>John R. Jun</b>	–	Minooka
<b>Lori Krakora</b>	–	Naperville
<b>Jennifer Sender</b>	–	Chicago
<b>Kevin Smith</b>	–	Berwyn

## STAFF

The Commission is operated by a team of dedicated staff members.

<b>Benro Ogunyipe</b>	-	Director
<b>Tonia Bogener</b>	-	Legal Counsel
<b>Dana Craig</b>	-	Program Coordinator
<b>Patty Greene</b>	-	Personnel Manager
<b>Janet Lambert</b>	-	Interpreter Coordinator
<b>Lee Taylor</b>	-	Office Assistant

## INTERPRETER FOR THE DEAF PROGRAM

The Commission operates the Interpreter for the Deaf Program that includes Interpreter Licensing and BEI Certification in accordance to the Interpreter for the Deaf Licensure Act of 2007. The Illinois Board of Interpreters provides recommendations to the Commission Director on issues related to the Interpreter for the Deaf Licensure Act of 2007. Information about the sign language interpreters including board members of the Illinois Board of Interpreters and Interpreter Licensing and BEI Certification during the fiscal year can be found on Pages 9, 10, and 11.



## Mission Statement

*The Illinois Deaf and Hard of Hearing Commission shall promote system change, community education and collaboration to advance effective communication access for all individuals with hearing loss in Illinois.*

## Objectives

The Illinois Deaf and Hard of Hearing Commission (IDHHC) promotes education and awareness about hearing loss and the legal requirements for effective communication on behalf of people with hearing loss in Illinois.

The Commission strives to promote independence for individuals with hearing loss by providing technical assistance and training to enhance public and private programs, and by making legislative and policy recommendations to assure accessibility.

The Commission provides statewide resources to assist the Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and DeafBlind community in Illinois. The Commission also regulates licensure for sign language interpreters and maintain an online directory of all licensed Illinois sign language interpreters.

## Core Functions

- Promote independence for individuals with a hearing loss
- Increase quality and number of sign language interpreters
- Provide educational awareness regarding hearing loss
- Provide statewide resources

## Vision Statement

*All Illinois residents with a hearing loss will enjoy the benefits of a fully accessible society enabling each person to participate in and contribute to all aspects of life.*

## History

In 1995, various leaders in the Deaf and Hard of Hearing community started discussing the desire for a governmental body to focus on the needs of individuals with hearing loss. This group developed into a Task Force to lobby for the formation of a new state agency.

The Governor issued an amendatory veto to legislation establishing Illinois Deaf and Hard of Hearing Commission (IDHHC) as a state agency and changed it to an advisory committee under the Department of Human Services. Based on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing community outcry, the House and Senate both overrode the Governor's veto. While officially established on January 1, 1997, IDHHC opened its office in November 1998, when the first Director was hired.

# PROGRAM & OPERATIONS

## Statewide Services, Resources, and Information

The Commission provides statewide services, resources, and information about Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and DeafBlind. During the Fiscal Year 2022, the Commission received 16,146 public inquiries and provided requested information and referral as appropriate to individuals, and public and private entities for issues including, but not limited to, accessibility and accommodation issues, advocacy organizations, assistive technology, centers on independent living, discrimination complaints, educational options, service and resource availability, sign language interpreters and communication access, telecommunication equipment, and state Vocational Rehabilitation(VR)program. On an ongoing basis, the Commission reviews federal and state statutes, regulations, and policies regarding Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and DeafBlind.

## Community Outreach & Collaboration

The Commission promotes outreach effort to all Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and DeafBlind communities to increase visibility and awareness of the Commission program and operations. Some of the highlights during the Fiscal Year 2022, the Commission presented or participated in the meetings, including but not limited to: 988 Key Stakeholders Coalition, ADA Project Steering Committee, Interagency Committee on Employees with Disabilities, and Illinois Department of Human Services, Division of Mental Health.

## Technical Assistance, Consultation, & Training Support

The Commission provides technical assistance, consultation, and training support to improve access to public and private programs and services for persons who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and DeafBlind. Some of the highlights during the Fiscal Year 2022, the Commission collaborated with the Illinois Department of Human Services, Division of Mental Health on the planning and development of effective communication from a network of crisis centers of 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline for people who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing and DeafBlind; provided technical support and guidance to Illinois Department of Human Rights on sign language and captioning for public trainings and meetings; and collaborated with the Illinois Department of Public Health on developing and reviewing the existing educational materials and documents to be culturally and linguistically appropriated for people who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing and DeafBlind.

1360

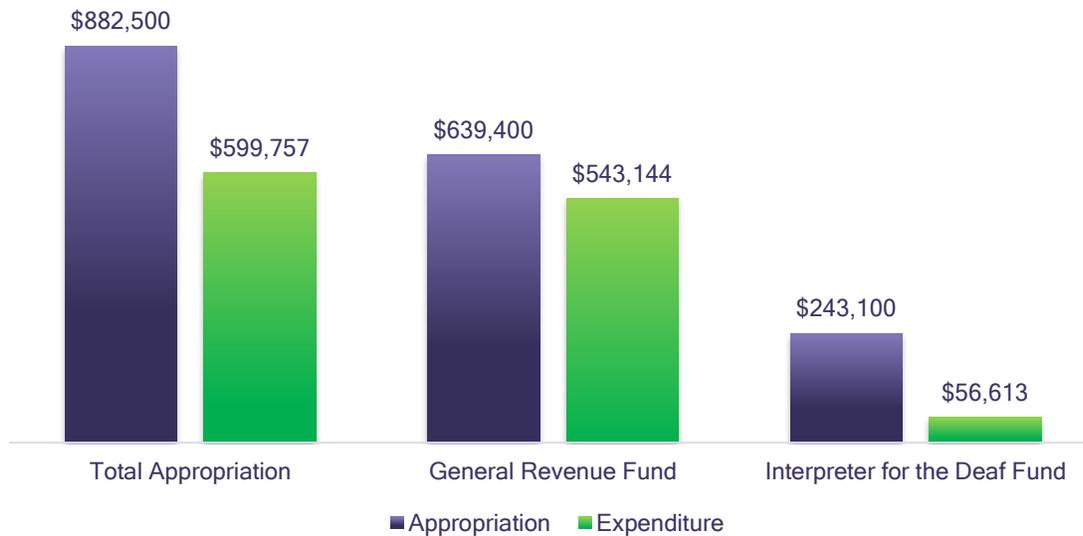
## *Communication Visor Cards*

The Commission distributed 1360 Communication Visor Cards to state, local, and municipal law enforcement agencies. The Commission continues to educate service providers and employers of their obligations to provide effective communication under the Americans with Disabilities Act.

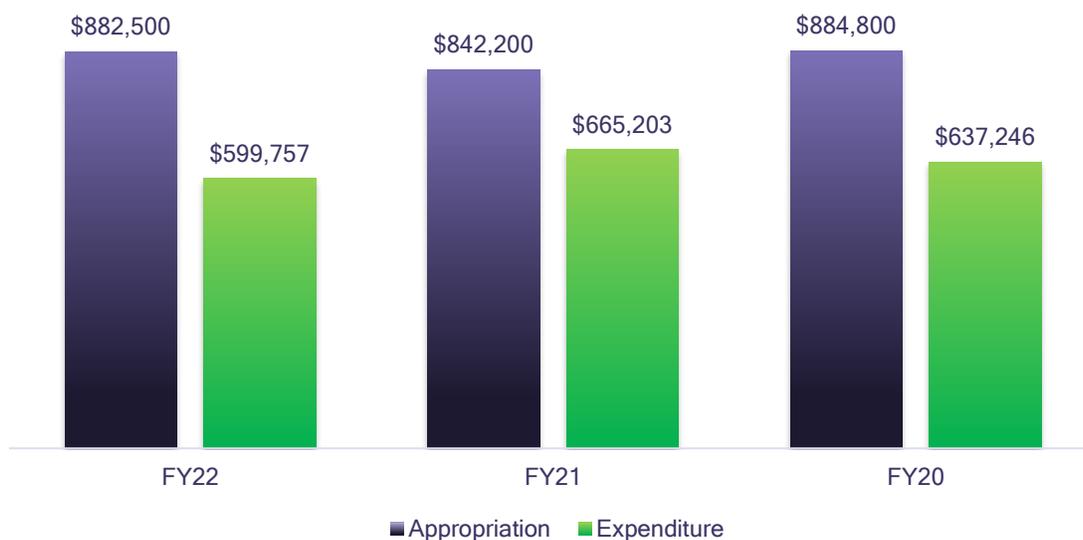
# COMMISSION BUDGET

## \$882,500

### Fiscal Year 2022 Appropriation & Expenditure



### Historical Appropriation & Expenditure



# STATISTICAL INFORMATION

	FY22	FY21	FY20
Public Inquiries	16,146	17,168	15,017
Educational and Informational Materials Distributed	15,728	17,945	48,692
Interpreters Participated in IDHHC Sponsored or Hosted Professional Development Opportunities	252	109	123
Communication Visor Cards Distributed	1360	1214	4,179
Subscribers to IDHHC Electronic Mail Communications	715	732	658

**15,728**

*Number of Educational Information and Materials Distributed*

## Legislative Bills & Resolutions

The Illinois General Assembly's main functions include enacting, amending or repealing laws; passing resolutions; adopting spending bills; and examining proposed legislation. During the legislative session, thousands of bills and resolutions were introduced in the areas of government, education, regulation, human needs, health and safety, agriculture and conversation, transportation, rights and remedies, and business and employment. The Commission monitors bills and resolutions that are relevant to the Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and DeafBlind communities in Illinois. The Commission also provides a list of relevant bills and resolutions to the public on the website for informational purposes only and does not necessarily reflect the Commission's position. During the Fiscal Year 2022, some bills became laws that effect the needs of Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and DeafBlind population. Visit the Commission website for a list of bills that became Public Acts.

# SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETERS

The Commission is a licensing body responsible for the enforcement of the Interpreter for the Deaf Licensure Act of 2007. The Commission also administers the Illinois Board for Evaluation of Interpreters (BEI) certification test; maintains an online directory of all licensed interpreters by proficiency levels, geographic regions, counties, and contact information; and conducts investigation of alleged violations and in cases of substantiated allegations, various voluntary corrective measures are used including imposition of discipline when appropriate.

## ILLINOIS BOARD OF INTERPRETERS

The Illinois Board of Interpreters consists of seven (7) members appointed by the IDHHC Director. The Board is composed of four (4) licensed interpreters for the deaf and three (3) deaf or hard of hearing consumers and the IDHHC Interpreter Coordinator. The Board provides recommendations to the IDHHC Director on issues related to the Interpreter for the Deaf Licensure Act of 2007.

<b>Laura Braucht</b>	–	<b>Joy</b> (Chairperson)
<b>Hershella Ashford</b>	–	<b>Chicago</b>
<b>Kimberly Berger</b>	–	<b>Murphysboro</b>
<b>Donna Elliot</b>	–	<b>Creston</b>
<b>Teri Hedding</b>	–	<b>Palos Hills</b>
<b>Barbara Pawlica</b>	–	<b>Brookfield</b>
<b>Rachel Kruk</b>	–	<b>Monee</b>

### STAFF

<b>Janet Lambert</b>	–	<b>Interpreter Coordinator</b>
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**252**

*Number of Interpreters Participated in the Commission Sponsored Professional Development Opportunities*

## 2022 Professional Interpreter Development Opportunities

The Commission once again cancelled its Annual Interpreter Conference. In lieu, the Commission sponsored virtual professional interpreter development opportunities in June, July, and August: *English Comprehension – Preparing for the TEP; Deliberate Practice; Mentoring Workshop; Mirror, Mirror! Reflections of Ethics and Professionalism; and Seven Deadly Sins of Interpreters.*

The Commission also sponsored two week-long Basic Interpreter Institutes and an Advanced Interpreter Institute. A total of 252 attendees, with 57 total Continue Education Hours offered.

**2022 Professional Interpreter Development Workshops**

**252**

**Total Attendees**

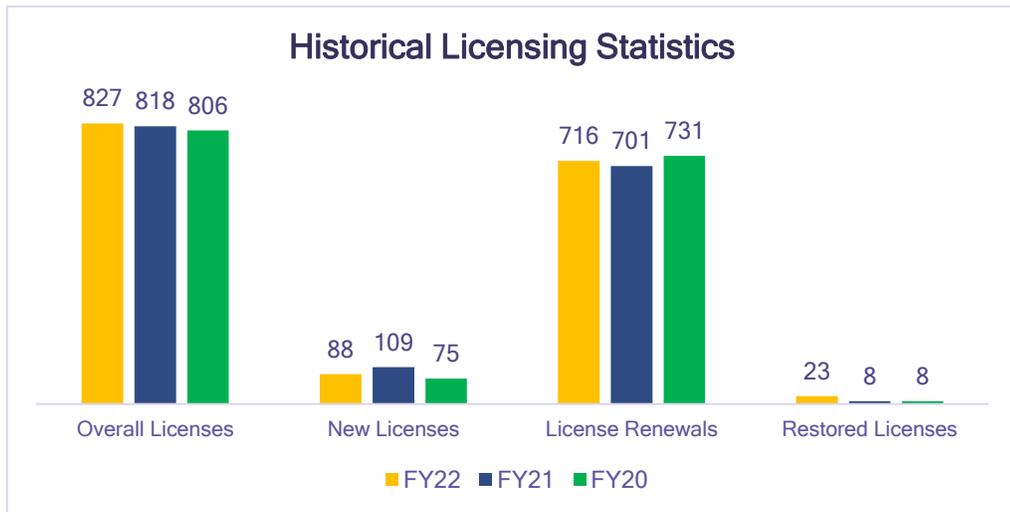
**57**

**CE Hours Offered**

# Illinois Interpreter Licensing & BEI Certification

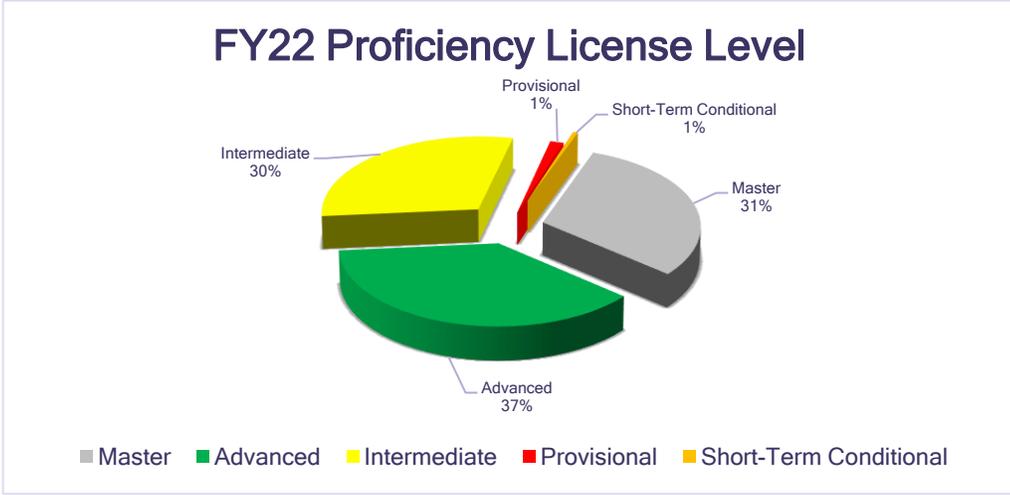
	FY22	FY21	FY20
Total Licensing & BEI Applications	1163	1104	1279

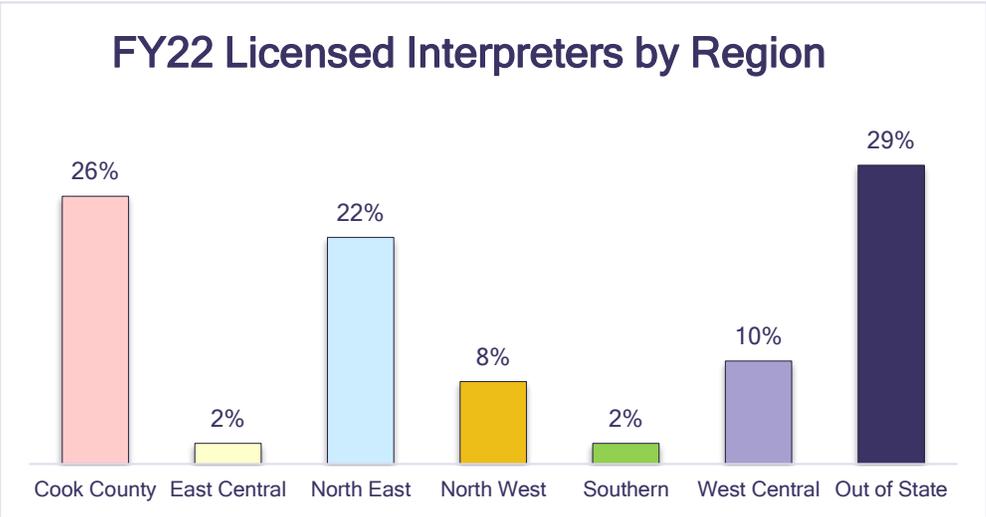
## Illinois Interpreter Licensing Statistics



**What's New?**

The Commission reopened the Illinois BEI Interpreter Testing in October 2021 after a year and half suspension due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Written TEP and Performance Exams for Basic, Advanced, and Master Levels all were reopened to resume for the waitlisted and new candidates.

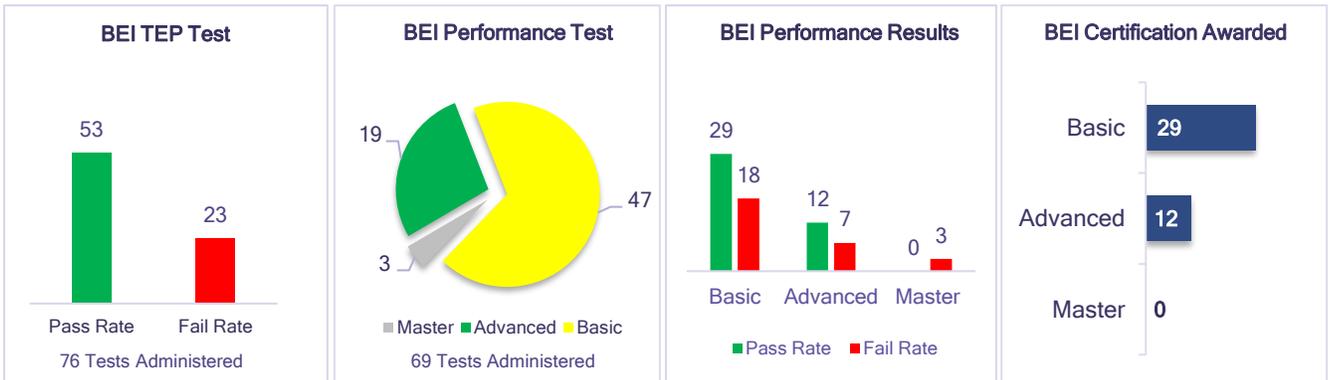




### BEI Testing and Certification Statistics

		FY22		FY21		FY20	
<b>BEI Certification Tests Administered</b>		<b>145</b>		No BEI Certification Tests Administered Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic.		<b>131</b>	
<b>Test of English Proficiency</b>	<b>Performance Test</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>59</b>

### BEI Tests Results & Certification Statistics



### Illinois Interpreter Training & Interpreter Preparation Programs

College of DuPage, Glen Ellyn  
 Columbia College Chicago, Chicago  
<sup>1</sup>Illinois Central College, East Peoria  
 John A. Logan College, Carterville

Moraine Valley Community College, Palos Hills  
 Southwestern Illinois College, Belleville  
 Waubensee Community College, Aurora

<sup>2</sup>Quincy University, Quincy  
<sup>2</sup>William Rainey Harper College, Palatine

<sup>2</sup>MacMurray College, Jacksonville  
<sup>2</sup>Richland Community College, Decatur

<sup>1</sup>Denotes Program Is Fully Online  
<sup>2</sup>Denotes Program Suspended or Closed



Electronic Publication available at [www.idhhc.illinois.gov](http://www.idhhc.illinois.gov)

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